

Teacher's Pet Sessions

Training Session 7 – “Here” - Getting a Reliable Recall! – 1

Pet Life Radio!

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Female Announcer: Ok class, take your seats! I said take your seats! Class...sit! (shhhhh)
I swear you're all acting like a bunch of animals. (sounds of animals)
Pet Life Radio Presents, *Teacher's Pet*, where you'll learn how to understand and communicate with your pet, and train them to be the best pet they can be. (bark!) It's time to see the world from your pets point of view. So give a tail wagging welcome to your *Teacher's Pet* Host, on PetLifeRadio.com. You may even learn a few tricks yourself! (bark bark!)

Pia Silvani: Hi, welcome to *Teacher's Pet*, on Pet Life Radio. This is Pia Silvani, Director of Training and Behavior at St. Hubert's Animal Welfare center, in Madison, New Jersey, and your host. This week you will be teaching your dog to move toward you when called. Sit in front of you, until released, by pairing two different exercises together. This is the first step to teaching a really reliable recall. I'm sure all of you dream of having that perfect dog that comes to you reliably, every single time you call. Yet, unfortunately few people own such a dog. Instead many people's dogs ignore their owner's requests to come, or worse yet, run away when you say “come.” Teaching your dog to come to you is probably one of the most difficult things to teach. Since you must be consistent, each and every time. You must ensure that the dog does in fact, come, each and every time. And you must be careful not to be sloppy, and reward slow responses. As we discussed in the past, every behavior you teach your dog must have a specific definition, so it is clear to you, as well as your dog. I personally like to use the word “here” as oppose to “come.” Far too many of us use the word “come” in our day-to-day communication with our dogs. For example, we might say “Oh, come on buddy... come on, you know better. Sit.” or “Come here now or I'll get that spray bottle” , so they threaten their dog. So from the dog's point of view, what do you think “come” means? Hmmm. Not really sure.

So if we're gonna define “here,” “here” means the dog should stop what he's doing, run to you, find your feet, and sit until you release him with your release word, “OK.” This should occur each and every time, in order for you to get a really reliable recall. However, people make a few mistakes. First, probably one of the most devastating things to people, is, seeing your dog running loose, at free, sort of out of control. Perhaps he grabbed a forbidden object, and ran away with it, maybe he chewed something up that was valuable, or suddenly ran out the door. And the owner calls the dog to “come” and the dog obeys. But when he comes to you, all of a sudden he receives punishment. So you think you're correcting the dog for his inappropriate behavior, when in fact, you really corrected the dog for coming to you. So what did he just learn? What do you think's gonna happen next time he picks up an object and starts to run? He probably won't come back. He's figured out already that moving toward you,, sometimes will give him a rewards, and sometimes he will receive punishment. So he's going to be confused. So therefore never call your dog to you if you're going to punish. Secondly, avoid calling your dog if you're planning to do something unpleasant. For example, you don't want to call him to you if you're gonna give him a pill, or you're putting him in his crate, giving him a bath, clipping his nails. Now he's making a poor association again with the word “here.” So of course that depends on individual dogs, many dogs love to have a bath or night love to be put in their crate. But I would probably use a different word, such as “go crate” or “go home.” And thirdly, avoid calling your dog if

you haven't trained him to respond. And I'll go over that in detail. Remember dogs are not born knowing what the word means until we teach it. So once you've begun working on teaching a recall, do not use the word in difficult situations that are beyond his ability. When we teach children to add for example, we begin with two plus two, very simple arithmetic. We would not expect a child, who has maybe two or three weeks of addition under his belt, to now start to add columns of three or four digits. So, dogs are the same. So you need to make sure that you are training your dog at his level of capability, of where he is. So you don't wanna all of a sudden jump from simple arithmetic to calculus. It's too difficult for the dog. So, for example, say you've been working on "here" in your backyard, in your house, where there are no distractions, and your dog is really doing fine. And then one day you decide to take him to the park, and he spots a squirrel, and off he goes he runs to the other end of the park going fifty miles an hour chasing the squirrel, and all of a sudden you say "buddy here!" and he doesn't even turn to look. Well, what you've just done is, you've moved him from simple arithmetic, to calculus. So, do not expect that, why would he ever understand, at that point. He's off leash, he's running full speed ahead, after a very tempting distraction. So you should only use the word "here" if your dog is capable of obeying it, and you are capable of enforcing it. So before we begin our training session, if you don't have your dog, and some really yummy yummy treats, your tug toy, now's the time to get ready. You'll also need, as always, a piece of paper and a pen, to take some short notes. So, we're gonna take a very short break, and when we return, get ready to have some fun!

(music starts)(bell ringing)

Female Announcer: Ok class, grab your tuna flakes, biscuits and bones! *Teacher's Pet* will be back in two shakes of a tail, right after recess! (woof woof!!)

(music ends)

(music starts)

Male Announcer: Lets talk pets, on PetLifeRadio.com!

(music ends)

(Bell rings)(Music starts)

Female Announcer: Ok class! Hang up your collars and leash's; Teachers Pet is back in session. Now park yourselves on the floor (lots of barking) I said park, not bark... "sigh" Ok, *Teacher's Pet*. Pay attention there may be a quiz later...

Pia Silvani: Welcome back! This is Pia Silvani, host of *Teacher's Pet*, on Pet Life Radio. Thanks for joining us! Today we're gonna be working on the word "here." Before we begin, it is critical that you reward your dog whenever he checks in with you, even if you have not called him. The more you reward your dog, called "free check ins", the more your dog will want to check in, and pay attention to you. So take every opportunity that you can to reinforce your dog any time he moves toward you. So for example your out in the backyard, and he suddenly turns and looks at you, mark it with a "yes," and reward him. And as a reminder, rewards do not necessarily mean treats. It can be a ball. So if I take my dogs outside, as I did this morning, and I had, they were carrying their Frisbees, and they turned to check to see where I was, and I marked it with a "yes" and I tossed the Frisbee in the other direction. So I gave them a reward for checking in. Build an absolute trust between you and your dog, so the dog never worries about coming to you. It needs to always be a positive experience. Then rather than being fearful of coming, he's going to enjoy moving towards you. Praise him for coming, and praise is not just some sort of muttered "good boy," it means being sincere, it mean being enthusiastic. Animated praise is gonna bring that dog bounding to you every time you call, So it's also critical that you vary your rewards. Your dog should not expect a certain reward, for example, say you're using some boiled chicken, your dog loves boiled chicken as the reward. If he thinks ever single time you call him to come to you he's going to get boiled chicken that's going to get dull after a while. So you have to make sure that your always changing your rewards around so that the dog never knows what he's going to get. But it's got to again, once again, be good for the dog. Now in the mean time accidents happen to all of us, and there's your dog, he's out loose. If "here" is not usable yet, and you

don't have a really reliable recall with the word "here," there are a few tricks that you can use to get the dog to come to you. You can always use the old standby, "do you want a cookie?". If that brings him back from the middle of the road then my recommendation is use it, have a big smile on your face but don't fake him out, make sure you go and get him a cookie. You can also try to temp him back with something else. Do not punish him for running away, again, don't fib.

You can also use an old time distraction, dogs do this to one another, all of a sudden they become real interested in something in the grass, for example you might squat down, fiddle with a blade of grass, most dogs at that point will come running over. If they do, however, be careful not to reach out suddenly and grab for them. Just praise him calmly, you might want to pet him, sit in the grass, wait for him to come over. Don't start chasing him, if he starts to game play the worst thing you can do is chase your dog. So that's a rule number one, *people don't chase dogs, dogs chase people*. And the third is, and again we work on this all the time, is run away. It's amazing, dogs love to chase, they love to chase wildlife, they like to chase inanimate objects. So they should enjoy chasing you. So my preference is to run away from the dog. And when he catches up with you, then praise him. But the key is to stay calm, don't panic if the dog is loose, try not to yell, try not to scream. I know it's nerve racking, you're completely concerned, but you don't want to frighten the dog as a result of that. Now in the mean time when you're teaching "here," you can use other word in non-emergency situations. For example if I'm gonna send my dogs out, I'm gonna call them maybe from the kitchen to let them out to relieve themselves. I use the words "dogs out!" and they immediately run from the kitchen or wherever they are, to the front door. If they're outside, if I'm outside with them, and now I want to bring them back inside, what I'll say is "dogs in!" and we run inside. And I will always rewards my dogs for coming inside, I want them to enjoy coming inside. So you might want to run to the refrigerator and get them a nice piece of carrot or something, they can always get a cookie, so running to the cookie jar. But dogs should say "oh! My owner just said 'in' I love moving from outside to inside." But you can also say "this way!" meaning change your direction, "lets go" you can make a sound, such as a whistle, a clucking noise with your mouth. Anything that interests the dog. So the key is to set you dog up for success each and every time. That's the only way that you're going to get your really reliable recall.

So lets start off first, by...we're gonna take, again, I'm gonna remind you what the definition is. "Here" mean move to my feet, wherever you are, if you're one foot away, or of you're a hundred feet away. Run as fast as you can or move to my feet as quickly as you can, and when you get there, sit. Remain seated until you place your hand on the dog and you give him a little pat pat, just like you did with stay, "ok" and then you play. So how we're gonna do this, I want you to get several treats in both hands. So maybe take five treats in one hand, and five treats in the other hand, and start of with your dog facing you, so your facing each other. Your gonna now take both hands, and your going to put them immediately right in front of the dogs nose, wherever that might be. So your in front of the dog hands are right in front of the dogs nose, and as you do your gonna take one step backwards, as you take a step backwards your gonna say "here" and then your gonna lift the treat up so your luring the dog into the seated position. So again remember "here" means find my feet and sit, so there's no need to say "sit" you can just lure the dog into the sit. You can, even if it helps you out a little bit, you can take your two pointer fingers and point towards your feet. Ok that'll help you bring your hands up. You don't want to bring the food to high that might cause the dog to jump. You don't want to push the food away from your body that will teach the dog to sit too far away from you. But your goal is to bring him in as close as you can. As soon as he does, as soon as he's seated, you're gonna mark it with a "yes!" and your gonna give him one treat. He should still be in the seated position. Together again you're not adding any distance, together again, hands in front of the dogs nose, right in front of his mouth, you take one step back as you say "Buddy here!" lure him into the sit, when he's in the sit, give him a treat. Ok let's try that again, one more time. Food is in front of his nose, take a step back together, think of this as a dance, you're dancing together, you're moving together. Say "buddy here" should be following you, once he's seated "yes" give him two treats now. If he's doing well with that, I want you to give some room, give some space now, and now you're gonna take two step backwards. So again you're starting

right in front of one another, hands in front, you have food in your hands, it's "buddy here" one, two, lower into the sit. Once he's seated, mark with "yes" give him a treat from each hand. Try that again, if he gets up at any time don't worry about it right now he doesn't have to hold that position so you don't want to use "stay." We're just worrying about getting him to move to you and sit. So let's try two steps again, so name and "here", one, two, lower him into the sit, give a treat from either, mark it with a "yes" treat from either hand, and now just release him, with an "ok." Alright, give him just a little bit of a tug break, if you can in between, and then we'll add a couple more steps, as you're doing this. And again be careful when you're backing up you just need to step backwards, there's no reason to run at this time. I'm gonna teach you about speed later on. This is about finding, pairing up the word "here" with the behavior you want. Alright so let's try again get some food in your hands this time you're gonna take three steps, so, have enough treats in your hands, now what you're gonna do again, place the food in front of the dog's nose, say the dog's name, and now it's three steps.. Name and "here" one, two, three, lower into the sit. Once he's seated, tell him "yes" now give him three treats. And notice what happens when you're giving him three treats you don't want to give him three treats at one time. It's one treat from one hand, one treat from the other hand, one treat from one hand, and then you're done. Always think to yourself, it's more rewarding for the dog if he hopes that you're gonna give him more rewards versus just getting one large biscuit. Ok, if you're successful with that then you can add a time. Now we're gonna add a little duration where the dog's gotta sit there a little bit longer. Again there's no reason to say "sit" there's no reason to say "stay." "Here" again means, find my feet, and sit, remain there until I release you. So we'll work on the release now. Ok, here we go. Let's do three steps. So I want you to have enough food, I want you have, enough food on you. So more than three treats. So food in front, the dog does not have to start in the seated position, he can be in any position he wants. You're gonna say name "here" one, two, three, lower him into the sit, tell him yes, now don't give the treat yet. Tell him "good boy", now deliver a treat. Wait him out, praise him calmly, and now give a second treat, continue to praise him calmly, now give him a third treat. Praise him calmly, if he's still sitting there, give an "ok!" and immediately go and tuck. Alright so what I would like you to do during our break were going to take a little short brake to hear from our sponsors, so I'd like you to practice that, again our goal right now during the break as you're practicing is to see if you can get your dog to sit there a little bit longer, he's gotta learn some patience, in hopes of getting more treats you can vary it, sometimes maybe give him one treat then release, sometimes give him three, you could give him five, and then release.

At the end of the release though make sure that you are playing with your dog so he doesn't say "Ok! I'm done, and off I go.." and start sniffing the floor. Keep him with you. Now the next part of the recall that we're gonna work on this particular week is speed. So we're gonna separate the speed, from the sit. So what I would like for you to do now is, it is always helpful if you can have someone holding your dog back, if you don't have anybody what you can do is you can run away. Again this teaches your dog that to chase after you. So I'm gonna explain the exercise and what you can do is, you can work on this on your own, so here's one way. If you have a partner with you, what you'd like your partner to do is hold your dog back, so your kind of teasing him a little bit. And he knows you've got the tug toy, maybe he knows you've got some food on you, and you're gonna show him what you have, ok, and you're gonna get him real revved up and really excited. And you're gonna now take off and run away. Any distance you don't want to go too far, you might want to do maybe thirty feet to start with. You're gonna run away, turn, and face your dog. Your dog should be pumped up, he should want to get to you. As soon as he's excited you're gonna say your dog's name, "here" and use the exact same motion, pointing to your toes, as you did when we did one step. He needs to run in and immediately plant that butt. Think of it as a plane landing into the runway, He's coming in, the jet is coming down to the runway, and it lands. So the landing is the sit. That's when he gets his reward. So you need to cheer him on the whole way. You should give him several treats, again he should not get up until you release him, when you release him then you can start to play with him again. So, if you don't have a partner, what you can do now is, I'll explain this and you can work it, you can tease him, with your object whatever he's really super motivated by, and this is fun outside, because he'll really wanna pay attention to you. You're just gonna take off, and you're gonna run, and you're gonna tell the dog, and you're gonna say

the dog's name, "here" and just take off and run your dog should be chasing after you. If he's starting to bite you, not aggressively, but he's getting too routty, maybe he's getting too pumped up, you might not want to run quite so far, or you might want to show him that you have something in your hand, so he's not focused on your body. Quickly turn, your gonna quickly turn, and lower him into the sit, again be careful not to say "sit" remember this is not about sitting this is about what the behavior "here" means. Now I'm gonna keep reminding you. "Here" means move from wherever you are, find my feet, and sit.

So if we get that close the dog is going to say "Ahh I'm a hundred yards away and I hear "here" what I'm going to look for is I'm looking for that landing zone, I need to land right in front of my owner, because that's when I get my reward." Ok, so why don't you practice that, once or twice. Again if you have a partner, holding, that would be perfect, if you don't then just run away from your dog. But make sure your dog is not getting up, until you release the dog. That is critical. What you can also do, is take hold of the dog's collar, it's a good little test for you too. If when you reach for your dog's collar he suddenly jumps away, and he moves away, that's an exercise that you absolutely need to work on, it's critical that your dog permit you to take hold of the collar. That also tells me if he's running away that your grabbing for his collar for control too often, the collar shouldn't be there as a means of controlling him, the collar should be there, with its tags on it, God forbid in case he gets lost, and B for a leash to be hooked up on it, not as a means of controlling the dog. So you may need to work on that separately where you just take a reach of the dog's collar, and then you reward him, take a reach of the dog's collar and reward him, so maybe when he comes in you might go back to your one step, and say "here" take a hold of the collar before you give the treat, so he, again, he starts to learn that reaching for that collar does not necessarily mean that fun time is over. You can also take hold of that collar and tell him "ok" and maybe just walk him three steps, and then play tug with him. So make a real positive association with that collar reach. Now if your dog is sitting too far away from you, don't deliver the food, remember the dog needs to learn to come in, you almost want to think you want to meet toe to toe. If the dog is truly comfortable with you he might even be stepping on your toes. So the closer he is to you, the better. Alright, practice that one or two more times and then I'm gonna have you take a seat and I'm gonna make sure that we can do a quick review on what your homework is for the next two weeks before we move on.

All right, so let's have a seat with your dog, and again get him to relax remember when you're relaxing the dog should be relaxing at the same time. So your goal is to work in different environments, every kind of environment you can think of, make sure when you're in the house obviously the dog does not need a leash on him unless of course he decides that he's gonna run away for some reason. Though any time you're outside you want to make sure you have that leash, do not pull on the leash to get the dog to move into you. That's unpleasant for the dog, and again the leash should not be doing the work. Ok, your luring should be doing the work and your dog should want to move into you. So your goal is to go into various environments, in the backyard, the front yard, you can practice this if you take your dog for a walk in the street, throw a couple of these in. Take him to the park, take him out hiking. Periodically throw it in. So many people say, "he does really well at home, but when I get him out, he's real distracted." That tells me that you don't have a reward that's good enough. You might need to do more check ins with him, so that he checks in. Dogs obviously should be allowed to sniff, they have to be dogs, they should enjoy themselves, however, if you say the dog's name, or he's never checking in, that has not been reinforced. Dogs are always going to perform behavior that are reinforcing, to them, or that have been reinforced, by you. So you may need to bring better things with you, you may need to bring that London broil, that leftover London broil. Some people say they bring liverwurst with them, and that seems to work. So find out what really seem to work, for the dog, so you can ensure that he's moving towards you. So again, as a reminder, you're going to take several steps back, so it's the dog's name, "here", and he moves in, and sits. You're gonna reward him, and you don't always have to reward with food, also, you can take the food out of your hand, have nothing in your hand but have that tug toy or Frisbee or that ball in your back pocket, and as soon as he sits, say "yes" and immediately play with him instead.

So there's no reason to just give food. Then separately again if you can get a partner to hold the dog, again holding him back so you're really revving him up. Here's when you want to get your speed going. You run away, always running away, and this is a great game to play, with children if you have children, somebody holds the dog, and somebody runs away so you might hold the dog for your child, the child runs away, turns, calls the dogs name "Buddy here!" and make sure the dog sits, the child rewards the dog, and then plays. The child can hold the dog, if the dog isn't too big and the child isn't too small obviously you don't wanna a small child holding the dog, and then getting pulled over being dragged over. So make sure the child is capable of holding the dog. So you may need to be the holder of the dog when you're working with children. So your goal is to work on those two things, and again getting gone hundred percent reliability. Do not use the word "here" unless you know the dog is going to move to you. Really, really important. Remember the other words that I told you to use, "in" "out" "lets go" "this way" and in that emergency, that's fine, tell him "do you want a cookie?" If you need to get him close to you, doesn't matter. But if you're going to bribe, because that sort of is a bribe, make sure that you're coming through. Do not call your dog by calling "here" and then all of a sudden go "Oops I made a mistake.." Run inside, get your cookies and then say "here." Ahh, now the dog has really learned something really cold. "Ahh, don't move to the owner until the owner goes and gets the bag of cookies..or goes to the cookie jar" That bribing, that's critical that you're careful not to do that. Don't forget to check back with us, for training session number eight. I'd like to as always to give a special thanks to our producers, for making the show happen. Please go to PetLifeRadio.com and click on "*Teacher's Pet*" Also if you have any questions, comments, or ideas for the show, please e-mail me at pia@petliferadio.com. And I do want to thank several of the listeners I have gotten a few e-mails on suggestions and I promise I will discuss them in future segments. So until nest time, this is Pia signing off! Thanks for your interest in Pet Life Radio.

(music starts)(bell rings)

Female Announcer: Schools is session on Pet Life Radio with *Teacher's Pet*, learn how to communicate with your pet, train your pet, and see the world from your pet's point of view. You may even learn a few tricks yourself! *Teacher's Pet*, only on PetLifeRadio.com!

(music fades out)

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